

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRETOR 03723 01 OF 02 301841Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----113588 301845Z /41
O 301805Z JUN 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1594

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3723

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: WHERE DOES SMITH STAND?

1. AMBASSADOR LOW WAS GIVEN A COPY OF THIS EMBASSY
PRETORIA DRAFT IN SALISBURY AND HAS GIVEN HIS GENERAL
CONCURRENCE BY TELEPHONE, BUT MAY WISH TO COMMENT LATER.

2. IAN SMITH'S READINESS TO PROCEED WITH A MEETING,
ALBEIT A SECRET ONE, OF PRINCIPALS FROM ALL PARITIES
(PRETORIA 3543), WAS TAKEN AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF
HIS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE FAILURE OF THE
INTERIM REGIME TO MAKE MUCH HEADWAY IN BRINGING ABOUT
A CEASEFIRE AND A HINT THAT HE IS CONSIDERING OTHER
ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING DELAYING THE ELECTIONS.

3. SMITH'S MOTIVES IN ACCEPTING THE IDDEA OF A SECRET
ALL PARTIES MEETING ARE UNCERTAIN BUT PROBABLY COMPLEX.
NOW SANGUINE HE EVER WAS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS OF TURNING
AROUND ANY SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF GUERRILLAS IS HARD
TO KNOW. EARLIER HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE FELT
A TRANSITION GOVERNMENT WITH BLACK MEMBERS MOVING
TOWARD A ONE-MAN, ONE-VOTE ELECTION WOULD CREATE A SITUA-
TION IN WHICH THE WAR WOULD GRADUALLY DWINDLE AWAY, OUT-
SIDE POWERS WOULD BEGIN TO RECOGNIZE THE SETTLEMENT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRETOR 03723 01 OF 02 301841Z

AND NKOMO MIGHT POSSIBLY BE ENTICED IN. THUS HE HOPED
TO MOVE TO MAJORITY RULE IN A CONTROLLED SITUATION
WITH THE WHITE POWER STRUCTURE LITTLE CHANGED.

4. THE FAILURE TO ACHIEVE MUCH SUCCESS HAS NO DOUBT
HAD SOME EFFECT ON SMITH'S CALCULATIONS. STILL, WE
CANNOT BE AT ALL CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD CONTEMPLATE

AT THIS POINT ACCEPTING A TRANSITION PROCESS OUTSIDE OF WHITE CONTROL. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER SMITH HAS REACHED THE POINT OF OFFERING SOMETHING THAT COULD BE ATTRACTIVE TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AT THIS TIME. CERTAINLY, SITHOLE, MUZOREWA AND CHIRAU ARE NOT READY TO ABANDON THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND THEY CONCEDE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR AND FAILURE.

5. SMITH' CHANGE OF HEART ON AN ALL PARTIES MEETING MAY THUS BE ESSENTIALLY A TACTICAL TURN, ALTHOUGH ONE DICTATED BY A WORSENING BARGAINING POSITION. IT MAY BE THAT IN HIS READING OF UK AND US PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICULARLY WITH MAJOR OPPOSITION LEADERS IN BOTH COUNTRIES COMING OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, SMITH HAS DECIDED THAT IF HE CAN SHOW FLEXIBILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE A WIDER SETTLEMENT, HE HAS A GOOD CHANCE OF EVENTUALLY SWINGING WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION HIS WAY EVEN IF NO AGREEMENT IS REACHED WITH THE PF. WESTERN REACTION TO THE RECENT SPATE OF KILLING OF MISSIONARIES INSIDE RHODESIA HAS PROBABLY ALSO ENCOURAGED SMITH TO BELIEVE THAT A MORE SYMPATHETIC WESTERN ATTITUDE IS POSSIBLE, PROVIDED HE PLAYS HIS CARDS CORRECTLY.

6. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE URGED SMITH TO SHOW FLEXIBILITY ON THE QUESTION OF AN ALL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRETOR 03723 01 OF 02 301841Z

PARTIES MEETING. THE SAG ALSO VERY LIKELY VIEWS A SHOW OF FLEXIBILITY ON THIS ISSUE AS ADVISABLE FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND TACTICAL POINT OF VIEW; BUT IN ADDITION, THE SOUTH AFRICANS MAY ALSO SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ALL PARTIES MEETING OPENING UP PROSPECTS FOR SOME SORT OF BROADER AGREEMENT INCLUDING AT LEAST NKOMO. THE SOUTH AFRICANS ARE PROBABLY AT LEAST AS MUCH CONCERNED AS SMITH AT THE FAILURE OF THE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS TO WIND DOWN THE WAR. IN HIS FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE REMARKS IN PARLIAMENT IN MAY, PIK BOTHA FOR THE FIRST TIME CITED AN END TO THE FIGHTING AS A CRITERIA OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT'S SUCCESS. WHILE PRETORIA WOULD MUCH PREFER FOR THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT TO SUCCEED, IT APPEARS KEENLY INTERESTED IN AVOIDING THE EMERGENCY OF A BESEIGED BLACK-LED INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE TO WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE COMMITTED IN AN INTENSIFYING AND INTERNATIONALIZED CIVIL WAR. THE SOUTH AFRICANS CONTINUE TO SEE NKOMO AS THE KEY TO SOLVING THIS PROBLEM, ALTHOUGH THEY SEEM TO HAVE NO CLEAR IDEA AS TO HOW HE MIGHT BE BROUGHT INTO THE SALISBURY ACCORD.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PRETOR 03723 02 OF 02 301853Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----113698 301854Z /41
O 301805Z JUN 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1595

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PRETORIA 3723

NODIS

7. THE NKOMO FACTOR MAY ALSO BE A MAJOR CONSIDERATION BEHIND SMITH'S DECISION TO SUPPORT AN ALL PARTIES MEETING. SMITH, LIKE THE SAG, CONTINUES TO RETURN TO THE IDEA OF SOMEHOW WINNING OVER NKOMO AS THE SOLUTION TO THE SETTLEMENT PROBLEM. SMITH MAY HOPE THAT A NEW OPENNESS ON HIS PART, HIS OWN PRIVATE ASSERTIONS OF A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL PARTNERS, AND THE OFFER OF A SECRET UNCONDITIONAL MEETING, MIGHT SOMEHOW INCREASE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND ENTICE NKOMO INTO SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS.

8. IN SHORT, SMITH IS PROBABLY NOT CERTAIN HIMSELF WHAT WILL COME OF HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE IDEA OF A MEETING OF ALL THE PRINCIPALS, BUT HIS INSTINCTS TELL HIM THAT THIS IS A WISE COURSE. GIVEN THE FACT THAT SMITH IS APPARENTLY SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING DELAYING ELECTIONS BEYOND THIS YEAR, HE MAY SEE FLEXIBILITY ON AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AS A NECESSARY COROLLARY TACTIC. IF HE IS CONTEMPLATING PUTTING OFF ELECTIONS, SMITH WOULD PROBABLY FEEL THE NEED FOR ADOPTING A CONCILIATORY POSTURE ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A WIDER SETTLEMENT IN ORDER TO RESTRAIN THE RESULTANT SLIPPAGE IN HIS INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC CREDIBILITY.

9. WHAT SMITH ACTUALLY HAS IN MIND IN CONSIDERING A
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRETOR 03723 02 OF 02 301853Z

DELAY IN ELECTIONS IS ITSELF OBSCURE. AS TEVE LOW

POINTS OUT, SENIOR RHODESIAN SECURITY OFFICERS AS WELL AS THOSE AFRICANS NOW SUPPORTING THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, WOULD VERY LIKELY BE DISMAYED WITH A SHIFT AWAY FROM THE PRESENT COURSE. SITHOLE, AND PERHAPS MUZOREWA, COULD CONCEIVABLY AGREE TO CONSTITUTING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AS THE NEW INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE WITH A PROMISE OF ELECTIONS IN THE FUTURE. SMITH PROBABLY REALIZES THAT THIS COURSE WOULD ASSURE A CIVIL WAR AND PROBABLY REDUCE THE CHANCES OF BRINGING IN NKOMO. CONSEQUENTLY, HE MAY FEEL THAT BECAUSE HE HAS NOW ENMESHED MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE INTO THE PRESENT POWER STRUCTURE AND HE CAN BLAME THEM FOR FAILURE TO PRODUCE RESULTS WITH GUERRILLAS, HE CAN JUSTIFY SLOWING THE PACE OF THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND EXPLORE FURTHER THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING NKOMO A DEAL HE CANNOT REFUSE.

10. REGARDLESS OF SMITH'S MOTIVATIONS, HIS DECISION ON AN ALL PARTIES CONFERENCE REPRESENTS A FURTHER LOOSENING UP OF THE POLITICAL STALEMATE AND COULD HAVE UNPREDICTABLE EFFECT ON CURRENT ALIGNMENTS. POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS AND OF INDEPENDENCE UNDER THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WOULD RENDER THE SITUATION EVEN MORE FLUID AND COULD OPEN UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR A WIDER SETTLEMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THE STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT SMITH, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS INTERESTED IN BROADER OPPORTUNITIES THAT MIGHT ARISE, IS SEEKING ESSENTIALLY A PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE AND MAY PUSY ON TO "INDEPENDENCE" BY DECEMBER 31 WITH OR WITHOUT THE BLESSING OF ELECTIONS. EDMONDSON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, POLITICAL LEADERS, POLITICAL CONCESSIONS, NEGOTIATIONS, SECRET MEETINGS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR03723
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: ///////////////////////////////////////
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840150-2360
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978063/aaaaacan.tel
Line Count: 199
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 011c3a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2241831
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA: WHERE DOES SMITH STAND?
TAGS: PDEV, PINT, RH, (SMITH, IAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/011c3a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014